

# LOCAL I-S NEWS

*for department store workers*

VOL 2, No. 10

264

January 1, 1951

## OFFICIAL NOTICE GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

TUESDAY - JANUARY 2nd - 7 P. M.

MANHATTAN CENTER

(34th St. and 8th Ave.)

Constitutional Assessment of \$2 For Unexcused Absence

ADMISSION BY 1950 UNION CARD ONLY

Prepare for Election of Union Officers

Hear the Elections and Objections Committee Report

## BACK PAY DUE SOON; RAISE ADDS \$240 TO YEARLY SALARY

Early in January the pay envelopes of more than 8500 members of Local 1-S will include the recently won raise of \$3.25. In February the envelopes will bulge with hard-won retroactive pay, which in most cases will go all the way back to November 1st. By year's end the gains

scored in our recent negotiations will have put a total of about \$1,750,000 in the pockets of the membership and will have helped to bridge, at least in part, the gap between wages and living costs.

Key to the Union's success was the sensitivity of the officers to the growing needs of the members created by climbing prices. Fully aware of the difficulties to come, the Local's leaders nevertheless proposed to a September Shop Steward conference that a "cost of living" increase be sought to offset the difficulties created by record-high costs which followed in the months immediately after the outbreak of hostilities in Korea.

## Steward Graduates Study To Build 1-S

Nine more Local 1-S Shop Stewards joined the growing ranks of labor's graduates from Cornell University's Extension School of Industrial and Labor Relations.

Those who completed the course in "Grievance Procedures" were enthusiastic in their praise of the formal training. They also indicated that they would be among the first to register for the Union's new class in "Collective Bargaining, Mediation and Arbitration," which is scheduled to begin on February 6.

Shop Stewards receiving Cornell University Certificates from the most recent class are: Gwendolyn Bruce, Iris Carter, Lena Cella, May Fischer, Hazel Horder, William Kopper, Marian Pugliesi, Sidd Tegendhaft and Agnes Wagner.

## 1-S To Study Needs Of Working Mothers

Local 1-S, in cooperation with the Sociology Department of the College of the City of New York, will soon undertake a survey of its members who are working mothers in an effort to determine the existing needs for an expansion of child care facilities.

A conference, called by Professor Warren Brown of City College, was participated in by Local 1-S along with other Unions with a

(Continued on page 3)

Despite the fact that the Union's contract made no provision for a re-opening on wages at the time, the Union presented the facts and figures to management and demanded that immediate consideration be given to the problem.

A long series of hard, and frequently bitter discussions, preceded the Union's final victory. Sentiment among the members themselves remained divided until they were overwhelmingly convinced that every effort had been made to extract from Macy's every last possible cent.

### \$240 A Year

The Union's sensational victory, coming as it did when the contract was legally closed, will add a minimum of \$240 to the yearly pay of full-time workers who had been in the store thirty days as of November 1, 1950. Figured at the average wage of \$53.60 prevailing before the increase was negotiated, the raise adds up to an additional four and a half weeks' pay by the end of 1951.

(Continued on page 2)

## WELFARE BOARD PLAYS SANTA TO NEEDY KIDS

The Local 1-S Welfare Board played Santa Claus to hundreds of ill, underprivileged children at Bellevue Hospital.

Spurred by the enthusiasm and energy of Jack Fox, the Welfare Board donated \$50 and raised an additional sum for the purchase of hundreds of toys and games.

Huge quantities of rattles, toy guns, dolls, crayons, puzzles and other play things were sent to Bellevue, Inc., an organization also known as the "Substitute Mothers." That group took over and delivered the Local 1-S gifts in time to bring some holiday cheer into the lives of the confined tots.

Said Jack Fox, "the spirit shown this year means that next year we'll really be able to do a big job of helping some poor kids to whom Christmas is only a dream. Of course, the main job of the Welfare Board is to aid our Union members—and we're doing that, with a little good to spare for others around the holiday season."

## Inner-Union Democracy Helps Safeguard Workers' Rights

Democracy did not just grow. It was fought for and won over long years of struggle by people who demanded that they have a voice in deciding their own affairs. The right to be heard and the right to vote went hand in hand. And everywhere that people demanded these rights there were small groups who insisted that workers and "common people" were unable to make intelligent decisions and needed their "betters" to do their thinking for them.

The trade unions of our country followed the same pattern. Even today there are hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of Union members who are only allowed to rubber-stamp the decisions of the top bureaucracy. Opposition, of any kind, means expulsion and blacklisting. Stuffing ballot boxes and physically beating of other candidates is not uncommon in some labor organizations.

### Local 1-S Record

As our Local 1-S elections near it may be well to stop and take a look at our own record over the years.

Local 1-S has made democracy a living thing. Its constitution requires a most carefully (and non-partisan) distribution of nominating petitions to all who wish to circulate them. Any Union member in good standing can run for any office with only one requirement — he or she must have 100 signatures on the nominating petition. From there on it is up to the members to decide.

## 1951 UNION CARDS READY

1951 Union cards are now available at the Union office. Cards may be obtained by members in good standing.

Union cards have assumed new importance since Local 1-S has undertaken rigid enforcement of the rule which requires members to have their cards with them in order to attend Union meetings.

Don't put it off! Come to the Union office—pay for your 1951 Local 1-S NEWS Subscription and get your 1951 membership card. Do It Now!

In its eleven years, Local 1-S has elected three Negro workers to the Presidency—a record which can not be matched by almost another Union in the country.

Local 1-S is proud of its clean record and its success in making democracy work. The continued success of our Union depends on every member. Whether you agree or disagree—whether you are for or against — make democracy work! Be sure to vote for your Union officers on January 18 or 19 at the Union office or at specified voting places for Branch Stores. Let YOUR voice be heard!

## Staff's Skill And Know-How Assure Members Top Protection



The officers and staff of Local 1-S function as smoothly and effectively as a precision machine.

In order to keep close check on all new developments, compare notes and hear reports from all sections of the store, the Union's elected and appointed officials hold regular weekly staff meetings.

It is at these sessions that current problems are analyzed and discussed. Administrators, con-

fronted by new or unusual situations, get the benefit of the experience and the advice of the rest of the staff. As a direct result, every Union member is able to draw, not only on the skill of his own Administrator, but on the practical know-how of the Local's President, two Vice-Presidents and nine administrators.

The pooling of knowledge and experience avoids costly duplication of effort. A grievance won in one department serves as a precedent in all other sections. This means better contract enforcement, more job security and better working conditions for every Union member.

Around the table, from left to right are: Pat Favoino, Dick Vaughn, Roberta Felsen, Bob McLean, Bill Roschak, Vice President George Gurian, President Sam Kovenetsky, Vice President Elisabeth Hammond, Tom Raffaele, Dorothy Pandolfini, Andy Feliccia, Dick Pastor and Jack Jampole.



## BRANCH STORE NEWS



Dave Markowitz

them up all the way . . . Margie Mazzadri (F8), Stan Levy (F9), Mel Melnyk (F12), Tony Cassella and Dave Markowitz both of F6 were proposed and approved as the Flatbush Store Disciplinary Committee. First job this new group has is to conduct hearings on the people who did not carry out the Union decisions during our recent successful fight for a raise . . . Heard in the wind—a private party for the mens' "athletic club" scheduled for January. It promises to be a beaut! . . . Have you ever noticed the look of disappointment and dejection on a tot's face when told that there is no Santa Claus? We could have told them that a long time ago (based on our experiences with Macy's), but WE have a Union and don't have to rely on the reindeer express! Happy New Year to all!

### FLATBUSH

Because she's getting ready to submit her application for a leave of absence, Rhea Sabran has turned over her reportorial duties to yours truly, Dave Markowitz. Rhea has earned a hearty round of applause from all of us for the terrific job she has done . . . Joe Raimondi (F2), Pearl Feldman (F3) and Bill Kenny (FBR) are our newly elected Shop Stewards. We know we can count on them to keep the written grievances rolling and they know they can count on the Store Committee to back them up all the way . . .

### WHITE PLAINS

Somewhere in the middle of a series of transfers from coats to dresses to coats Dorothy Ciuffini (W4) found herself short changed a dollar in her pay envelope. We're not sure why she did not report it to the Union right away, but she went along for months just suffering in silence. When the Store Committee got wind of the story they went right to work. They submitted their grievance and then discussed it with management. A check of the records showed that the Union was 100% right and Dorothy got her dollar all the way back to July. Better late than never, but it wouldn't have happened if she had let us know right away—that's one of the big reasons we have a Union. Let's use it! At a recent meeting of the Store Committee with management we went over every name on the list of scheduled Christmas eve lay-offs. We checked them with a fine tooth comb to make sure that store-wide seniority was being carefully followed . . . IT WAS! From White Plains to the West Coast went best wishes to Catherine Polley (formerly W10) who left the store to join Bruce Barton (formerly Men's Shoes—now U. S. Navy) for an exchange of "I do's." Our very best to both of you, wherever you are, for a long and happy life together!



Pat Favoino

### JAMAICA



Joseph Lack

That brand new shelter at the entrance to the parking roof is an important improvement in working conditions gained for the parking attendants as protection against the cold winter at hand . . . The X-Mas "bonus" schedule went rather smoothly this year as a result of vigilance on the part of all the Shop Stewards. Let's hope that next year there will be a bona fide bonus with no strings attached! . . . Promotions for Christmas went to our most senior people—another bouquet for the Union . . . The Store Committee finally convinced management that some special recognition be given Gladys Wilson's special duties in the telephone room. Management agreed and rewarded her by giving her sponsor pay for handling assignments beyond her regular operator's duties . . . Eddie Guerrero of J1 has done it again! This time it's a boy named Pedro. Congratulations Ed . . . We're sorry to report that Margaret Hanley, of Packing, is out sick. We hope you recover quickly and will be back with us soon, Margaret . . . Dances and Christmas parties are fine, but one of the really important ways to keep our Union strong is to report and write up all grievances just as soon as they happen—we must not allow carelessness to let management get off the hook!

### PARKCHESTER

Probably because of the slowness of the mails during the holiday season, Parkchester copy for the Local 1-S NEWS did not arrive before we went to press. We'll use the space this time just to post a couple of reminders to all Union members and Shop Stewards . . . At the end of 1950 we are able to look back over a year in which Union members at Parkchester and in all the other stores have won some really big gains. Among the things that have made those gains possible is the fact that we have not allowed management to bend or break our contract. Many of the problems which have come up would have been settled sooner, however, if every man and woman did his or her job. Many times we have discovered that grievances have not been reported to the Shop Steward. On occasion we have also found that the Stewards have neglected to write up the grievance. Experience has taught all of us that the only way our rights can be protected is to promptly report any problem. The Union member, the Shop Steward and the Store Committee, aided by the Administrator and the officers of the Union can all work to guarantee that we will keep what we have and win more besides. If we get careless we may let our gains slip through our fingers. For our own sakes and for the good of all—let's stay on our toes and fight!



Georgine Staib

## Back Pay Due Soon . . . (Continued from page 1)

Over and above the annual \$240 hike in their pay, many members will receive automatic or merit raises which will still further increase their yearly earnings.

While, according to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average worker in New York State dropped from an average wage of \$60.01 to an average of \$57.26, including overtime, between September 1949 and September 1950, Local 1-S was driving its average upward to a new high of \$56.85 without overtime. For the first time in the history of the retail industry its wages were forced up to a point where there is no longer any appreciable spread between them and the rates being paid in basic, productive industry.

### 1-S Credit Union A Busy Business

Formed in August, 1950, the Local 1-S Federal Credit Union has boomed into a thriving banking business with more than 700 members and assets in excess of ten thousand dollars.

Its dramatic growth both as a saving and a lending agency, dramatizes the uphill fight being waged by Union members for some degree of security.

The Credit Union, directed and operated by elected members of Local 1-S, is open to all Union members. Accounts may be opened with as little as fifty cents. Join the Credit Union—at the Union office, open from 10 A.M. to 2 P.M. every day except Sat., Sun., and holidays.

### 1-S Still Sets Pace

In addition to contributing substantially to ending that differential, Local 1-S improved its position as pace-setter for the department store industry in New York.

On the basis of preliminary and unconfirmed reports it is estimated that the other organized stores of the city have gained approximately \$4 for the years 1950-'51 as compared with the \$5.03 gained by members of Local 1-S for the same period, thus widening the gap between its earnings and wages in other stores by another dollar a week. This was accomplished despite the fact that the other stores negotiated their gains under a wage-re-opening provision in their contract while Local 1-S had its

hands tied, in theory, until February, 1952.

Said President Sam Kovenetsky, "There can be no doubt about the value of the gains won by Local 1-S for its 8,500 members. Workers in the store for any length of time know full well the fruits our Union activity has born, both in terms of higher wages, improved working conditions and greater job security."

"The new member should also be fully aware that only through the efforts of Local 1-S do they enjoy such benefits as a guaranteed minimum wage and automatic raises which, over a relatively short period of time, bring them to the highest standards in the industry. We are proud of our accomplishments!"



Union members find that the Local 1-S Federal Credit Union is the best kind of "bank"—operated by Union members, for Union members.

### Health Plan Has Paid 3400 Claims

The Local 1-S Health Plan, in operation since August, 1949, has paid amounts ranging up to over a thousand dollars for hospital and surgical care of individual Union members.

In the sixteen months during which members of Local 1-S and their families have been protected by the Plan, more than 3,400 claims have been paid through the Union with a total cash value of almost \$200,000.

When Local 1-S first won Macy payment of the Health Plan, members were required to pay fifty cents a month towards the total cost. One year later, the Union was able to shift the entire cost of the Plan over to the company, effective on the first day of next month.

Thanks to the hard-hitting bargainers who represent the members of Local 1-S, 8,500 Union members and their families now enjoy protection which would normally be beyond their financial reach.

### HEALTH PLAN NOTE

If you plan to take a leave of absence for more than 30 days or if you leave the store and wish to continue your Health Plan coverage on a direct payment basis YOU MUST see the Local 1-S Health Plan Consultant at the Union office within 30 days from the end of the month in which you leave the store. Protect yourself—protect your family—protect your benefits. Be sure to come to the Union office on time!

is the Local 1-S by-word as more and more projects are planned and come into being. Your Union supports you — Support your Union!



The Local 1-S Health Plan has aided thousands of Union members with cash payments and sound advice that all adds up to better health at no cost or at very low cost. Health Plan coverage will soon be free.

### Additional Services Aid Members

Reaching into some of the most troubled corners of the members' lives, Local 1-S has, under its present leadership, organized a series of services designed to make life a little easier and a little better.

The Health Plan naturally ranks high on the list because of the necessary and valuable aid it has made available.

The Blood Bank, still less than a year old, can proudly take credit for having saved many lives and many more bank accounts. Blood, available to Union members at no cost, is a strong link in the Local 1-S no-cost or low-cost health program. Voluntary member donations to the Blood Bank support its entire operation.

The more recently organized Medical Plan was designed to provide top-notch general and specialized care at little or no cost to the Union members. The hearty votes

of thanks which have come to us from members so aided have proved the value of the Plan.

In addition to concerning itself with the physical well-being of its members, Local 1-S seeks to safeguard them against the multiple hazards of the law and other regulations. Because most people cannot afford the fees usually charged for legal advice, Local 1-S has established its free legal clinic. Advice has been sought, and given on problems ranging from compensation to marital to landlord. Through this service the Union has enabled many of its members to both save money and protect their rights.

Once again Local 1-S will have its accountant and tax consultant available to the members during the month of February so that they may legitimately get whatever tax refunds may be due them.

"For the good of the members"



## LOCAL 1-S NEWS

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LOCAL 1-S, UNITED RETAIL WORKERS, UNAFFILIATED  
125 West 33rd Street New York 1, N. Y.

President: Sam Kovenetsky  
1st Vice Pres.: George Gurian — 2nd Vice Pres.: Elizabeth Hammond  
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## Freezing Wages

We are against any freezing of wages at their present level and at the present time! We believe that such a freeze would be unfair, unsound and uneconomic. Our reasons are simple. Since the end of the last war prices and profits have skyrocketed. Wages have not kept pace. Every time labor has negotiated a raise the corporations have simply turned around and taken it back with steep increases in prices. They not only took back what they gave us, but increased their profit margin as well.

Then, we remember our experiences during the last war. We know that there was a substantial excess profits tax. We know that there was rationing in addition to price and wage control. And we know that even with all those safeguards the lower income groups took a beating because the black market favored those who could afford to deal in "under the table" transactions.

The businessman has more ways of getting around price control than the working man has to get around wage control. We are afraid that a freezing of wages will put us squarely behind the eight ball. We are afraid that we will find ourselves paying higher taxes and higher prices with our hands tied when it comes to fighting for wage increases that will allow us to live.

We are against a wage freeze without other guarantees because it can only serve to further reduce the purchasing power of the millions of workers throughout our nation. And we know that with lower purchasing power there comes a lower living standard. While we favor a strong defense against any aggressor in this period of national emergency, we still believe that essential to defense is a strong and healthy people. People who are able and willing to defend their land. Hungry people cannot do the job!

## Freezing Prices

We are for price control for many of the same reasons. We have been the unwilling victims of higher and higher prices. Because it has been impossible for our wages to keep up with the cost of living we have been forced to "voluntarily" reduce our standards. We have been witness to vicious manipulation of prices which has put basic foods and decent living quarters beyond the reach of many of us.

We who are members of a fighting Union have fared better than many others. By our strength we have won back part of what we have lost. The same cannot be said for millions of other workers who have been driven deeper and deeper into the bottomless pit of economic despair.

The measure of our wisdom must be the breadth of our vision. We must, for our own sakes, look beyond our own situation and realize that workers generally are bearing a burden far greater than their capacity.

We cannot accept, as right or necessary, the fact that some men are called upon to make the supreme sacrifice of giving their lives while others are allowed to go on making almost limitless profit. It is true that the government budget is high. To meet this budget we say, "increase the taxes on big business so that they will carry a fair share of the load!" We say this because billions of our tax dollars are going into the pockets of big business in the form of government orders for equipment and supplies and out of our dollars big business is making their superprofits. We say that industry today is making profits both out of our labor and out of our taxes. We say—business can afford to pay more than it is paying, so tax business!

## Action!

How many of us have complained to each other about prices and taxes? How many of us feel that we are being backed to the wall? But how many of us have done anything about it! To complain and mutter will accomplish nothing. The heart and soul of our democracy is our ability to make our voices heard. But a right that is not exercised is a pretty meaningless thing.

Let us speak out. Let us address our grievances to the places and the people who can help. If you've been hit and hurt by high prices—if you believe that you stand to lose more than you can gain by a wage freeze at this time—tell it to your Congressman and to President Truman. If they don't know what the people are thinking and saying they will listen to the voice of the lobbyists, the highly paid spokesmen that business keeps in Washington to influence the country's law-makers in their favor.

We have more voices and more votes than industry. We must speak out loud if we expect our government to speak for us!

## 1-S Wage Victory Irks District 65

The December 17 issue of Union Voice contained a pretty bad case of sour grapes.

Obviously aware of the fact that they could not equal the gains won by Local 1-S, the District 65 paper tries to tell its readers, in advance of a settlement, that they aren't going to get much *because of the Local 1-S contract!*

For the years 1950-'51 members of Local 1-S have won \$5.03. Said Union Voice, "The department store workers heard reports on the (Local 1-S) negotiations and spoke their piece. They resolved that no settlement would be acceptable that did not break the 'Macy pattern'."

Unfortunately for that paper's readers, they were not told the whole story. They were not told that the \$3.25 recently won by Local 1-S was, in largest part, a "cost of living raise" over and above previously won increases and that it was only the strength of Local 1-S that forced the company to sit down and bargain in spite of the fact that the contract was legally closed until February 1952.

Union Voice also neglected to mention the fact that the other department stores have been bargaining under a re-opening provision in their contract. They further omitted mention of the fact that the workers in those stores had gained nothing in 1950! They also failed to mention what most daily newspapers had already announced — namely, their settlement was to be for about \$4 a week — a long way from the \$5.03 that, according to them, "Macy management, which does not deal with District 65, put over . . . on its workers" — with the help of Local 1-S, of course!

## March Of Dimes Aids 1-S Member

The dimes, quarters and dollars contributed by Union members to the last campaign of the March of Dimes are now fighting to keep 1-S'er Anthony Di Lorenzo of the Receiving Department alive in his fight against polio.

Stricken shortly after he had participated in the Thanksgiving Day Parade, Anthony was rushed to Queens General Hospital and placed in an Iron Lung.

The Union promptly called on authorities at the March of Dimes, who, mindful of the outstanding fund raising job done by members of the Local, promised their fullest support and cooperation to Anthony, his wife Ann and two and a half year old daughter Emily.

President Sam Kovenetsky responded by writing to Mrs. Di Lorenzo requesting that she "feel free to call on the Union at any time."

The Local 1-S Welfare Board and Health Plan are also on the job to look after the stricken member's needs.

With this example of real assistance, members are urged to stand by for the annual Local 1-S March of Dimes Campaign and to be ready to GIVE GENEROUSLY!

**FREE  
LEGAL AID CLINIC**  
Local 1-S Attorney  
Sam Shapiro  
at the Union Office  
Every Tuesday  
5 to 7 PM



"He's waiting to see whether an excess profits tax is passed or not."

## Settled Grievances Give Workers Strength, Security

By Vice Presidents George Gurian and Elizabeth Hammond

While Local 1-S, under the leadership of the present administration, has organized Shop Steward classes and taken other steps to help insure the favorable settlement of grievances at the lower levels, many problems must still be taken to Macy's Labor Relations chief or Macy's President for final solution. Your Vice Presidents and your President are responsible for the handling of grievances at those top levels.

Over a typical twelve month period the Union's officers, backing up Shop Stewards and Administrators, have won a wide variety of important grievances which have meant people getting jobs back, raises, back pay, earned promotions and so on.

Last January Henry Ward, of Passenger Elevators, who had been unjustly fired, was reinstated to his job after the Union had waged an all-out battle on his behalf. Not long after that Joe Prenner, with 21 years of Macy service got a well-earned promotion only after the Union fought a company decision to give the better job to a worker with less seniority.

Winifred Norman of 26 Department owes her job to Union vigilance and its fighting ability, since it was Local 1-S which forced Macy's to cancel an old warning, rescind its dismissal order and return her to her job.

Ella Dedmond of 10 Manufacturing found herself richer by more than \$300, because her Shop Steward, her Administrator and her Union officers were all determined to see that she got everything she was entitled to.

Anna Tocci was the first to heap praise on the job done by the Union's officers when they won her a retraction of remarks made at her job review PLUS a \$2.25 merit raise after the company had tried to sidetrack her.

We could present any number of cases which have involved workers in almost every department in the store. We know that we have given Union members the protection they deserve, because we have won almost every case we have taken to Mr. Fischer or Mr. Weil. We have won, not because the company likes us, but because of the good contract we have and our determination to see that it is properly and fully enforced.

Our victories have saved jobs, won money and provided greater security for every Union member. We know that the members themselves are the best proof we can offer of the kind of job the Union has done.

## Working Mothers . . .

(Continued from page 1)

large percentage of women members.

Attention of the group was immediately focused on the fact that many mothers are forced to make unsatisfactory arrangements for the care of their children while they are at work. Parents of young, school-age children are frequently compelled to leave them with no after-school care or supervision, while parents of pre-school age babies must often rely on the cooperation of relatives or friendly neighbors.

It was stressed that almost without exception women leave home to work because of economic necessity and that as a result of their efforts to help provide for the physical needs of the family, the children, left without proper care, suffer.

The findings of the study will be used as one means of obtaining additional child care centers at fees which the average worker can afford to pay.



# Union Provides Rounded Activities Program For Members' Enjoyment



Dances, boatrides, bowling, basketball, softball and parties have actively involved thousands of Union members during the last twelve months.

In addition to putting championship teams into the field and conducting some of the most successful social affairs Local 1-S has provided useful outlets for its creative and talented members.

The Union co-sponsored, along with the Museum of Modern Art, a well-received and highly praised art show which consisted solely of work done by 1-S members.

The Union also played "angel" to the Herald Square Players and made financially possible their recent hit production of "Our Town" which was seen, enjoyed and cheered by hundreds of enthusiastic members.

With authority to buy an appropriate building already given by the membership, the officers of the Union are actively planning a still broader social and recreation program. "The Union office," says President Sam Kovenetsky, "should become the home away from home for a large part of our membership. They should be able to find a well-rounded social life within the framework of the Union. We are working towards that."

"In everything that we have undertaken so far we have been able to provide cultural and recreational activity for our members and their families at much lower costs than usual. A successfully expanded program will mean still more fun for more people for less money."



## KNOW YOUR OFFICERS

### SAM KOVENETSKY - Part II



From 1936 to 1938 Sam Kovenetsky was a self-styled "walking delegate" for the newly organized Local 1-S.

"I was in a perfect position," he says, "because I was pushing a stock truck all over the store and talking Union. I was the original walkie-talkie!"

By 1939 the walking and the talking paid off in the form of the first contract ever negotiated between Macy's and a group of workers inside the store. Six hundred non-selling workers from Receiving, Packing, Cafeteria, Supply and Order Filling were the first to tackle management. Sam recalls that, "the Union still didn't exist in any real physical form. We all were working at our jobs in the store and only at the end of the day could we begin to take care of Union business."

"We worked late into the night, running off leaflets, making plans

and dreaming of the future. There were lots of times when we'd be on the carpet for coming in unshaven and looking as though we had been on a spree. And it was difficult to explain that we had been up all night working on Union problems."

The first contract signed by Local 1-S won raises of \$1 and \$2 for the people covered. There was just one hitch. The company had the right to decide who was to get what. "There were a lot of surprised faces when I got a \$1 raise," Sam says, "but a lot of people figured it out and decided that the company was trying to prove that it didn't pay to be a Union leader."

Right after the signing of the first contract Sam was given another job by his Union supporters. In addition to his positions as head steward and Business Agent, Sam was elected the first President of the Union.

From the time Sam took over the helm, the Union grew by leaps and bounds. "By 1940," the President recalls, "the people were becoming less afraid. They began to accept leaflets and to talk Union. They all knew that something had to be done, but they didn't know how to go about doing it."

By 1946 the work of organizing the Herald Square store was practically completed and the Parkchester store was already in the 1-S fold. "Despite many obstacles we were able to win some pretty substantial gains in wages and working conditions. When the store was finally and fully organ-

ized, however, we were able to really set our sights and begin to move towards our goal of a dollar an hour."

In the course of the long, hard fight to build the Union, Sam says, "I lost a lot of friends just because there was so little time to see them. But I was making many new friends — people who to this day prize the sleepless nights and rough going during which lasting friendships and a thriving Union were born."

Sam Kovenetsky says today, "Before I became actively involved in the struggle for the right to organize and the fight for better economic conditions I didn't have what you might call a 'social philosophy'. But as we moved ahead I began to become aware of the role of politics in the everyday life of workers. I became aware of the economic aspects of discrimination."

"One of the real regrets in my life was the fact that I was barred from the Armed Forces of World War II. I was told that my deafness in one ear, due to a mastoid operation, made me a poor risk."

Sam Kovenetsky waged his own war, however, and it wasn't long before the Union's Constitution and its contracts began to reflect his victories. Discrimination was barred to both the company and to Union members and the Constitution safeguarded the democratic rights of all. As the Local's leader said, "the struggle had to be waged and won on all fronts and we did our part."

To be concluded in the next issue

## Low-Cost Swim-Gym Tickets Still Available At Union

With the rush of the holiday season over, Union members will be able and willing to give a little more thought to inexpensive recreation.

The Local 1-S Swim-Gym program at Textile High School still offers Union members a "best buy" for week-in, week-out sport.

Tickets, priced at only \$1, give members of Local 1-S use of the swimming pool and gymnasium facilities for as many as four nights a week. Tickets are good

until next May.

Throughout the store members are planning to get their regular parties together again. Many departments have a regular night on which they all go down for some needed exercise and relaxation. If your department hasn't gotten into the swim, get them together, bring them to the Union office and buy your tickets today! A season of fun for only a dollar is the kind of value everyone wants and members of Local 1-S can have!

## PERSONALS

WANTED—2-3 rooms to \$50, no particular location. Vet getting married needs apartment urgently. Call Ann Signore, Extension 2631 or LU 4-4974 after 7 P.M.

FOR SALE—Man's tan sports jacket size 42, Worn once. Cost \$30 will sell for \$15. Phone Extension 2020 from 11 to 4. #21-53

MEDICAL PLAN — for the name and address of the doctor nearest you CALL the Union Office — LA 4-9714 or Associated Physicians Medical Group — BU 8-4296 (Night or Day). Complete schedule of fees available upon request.

BLOOD BANK — If you need blood from the Blood Bank CALL Elizabeth Hammoned at the Union Office — LA 4-9714.

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